



WEST COAST GOVERNORS' AGREEMENT on OCEAN HEALTH

CALIFORNIA OREGON WASHINGTON

WCGA Action Plan Progress Report 2008–2010 Executive Summary

The West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health (WCGA) was created in 2006, and is a unique regional partnership established to protect and manage coastal and ocean resources and the economies they support along the entire West Coast. Upon completing an action plan in 2008, 10 Action Coordination teams, comprised of volunteers with expertise in priority areas, were created to develop and implement work plans to achieve high priority regional goals. The recently adopted National Ocean Policy identifies the WCGA as the regional ocean governance partnership for the West Coast and one of nine such entities recognized throughout the United States.

The following are key achievements that regional partners and the WCGA, including its 10 Action Coordination Teams, have achieved in the past 2 years:

Adapting to Sea Level Rise—The WCGA has commissioned a National Research Council study to help predict the potential impacts of sea level rise along the West Coast in the years 2030, 2050, and 2100. This information will provide important assistance to state and local governments to plan for the future.

Ensuring Clean Coastal Waters, Beaches, and Air Quality—The WCGA has created comprehensive approaches to improve coastal water quality, predict toxic algal blooms, reduce marine debris, improve methods to prevent and respond to oil spills, and help establish stringent emission standards for ships using the waters off our shores.

Protecting and Restoring Ocean and Coastal Habitats—The WCGA has coordinated programs along the entire West Coast to eradicate invasive species, such as non-native cordgrass (*Spartina*), which can overtake and eliminate critical wetland habitat. In addition, the WCGA supported efforts to develop and test ballast water treatment technologies that reduce the introduction of invasive species that can cause millions of dollars in habitat damage every year off our coastlines and within our bays and estuarine waters.

Implementing Ecosystem-Based Management—The West Coast Ecosystem-Based Network, intended to improve environmental and economic sustainability within six coastal communities by collaboratively engaging stakeholders, scientists, and managers on ecosystem-based projects, monitoring and assessing the status of ecosystem health, and providing critical information to inform management decisions, was launched in 2008. In addition, the WCGA successfully advocated for national bans of commercial krill harvest off the West Coast for ecosystem protection and supported integrated ecosystem assessments in the Puget Sound and other locations along the coast.

Reducing the Adverse Impacts of Offshore Development—The WCGA governors articulated a clear vision for the energy future of the West Coast with consistent opposition to new offshore oil and gas leasing, while taking action to explore the potential for new alternative offshore ocean energy development. Specifically, the WCGA is assessing the environmental, social, and economic impacts and benefits of potential new alternative energy projects and seeking to provide data and information through new tools, such as marine spatial planning, to evaluate future siting opportunities.

Increasing Ocean Awareness and Literacy Among Citizens—The WCGA is assessing ocean awareness programs within K-12 schools to develop resources schools can use to improve knowledge of the ocean.

Expanding Ocean and Coastal Scientific Information, Research, and Monitoring—The WCGA worked with all West Coast Sea Grant Programs to determine the most important regional marine research and information needs and to help support projects to conduct this research. In addition, the WCGA states are working to map the entire seafloor off the West Coast, produce readily accessible mapping products, and to support ongoing efforts to monitor wind, wave, and current conditions off the coast. This information will benefit mariners, search and rescue operations, ocean fisheries management, and efforts to predict the movement of potential oil spills.

Fostering Sustainable Economic Development in Coastal Communities—The WCGA supported the allocation of \$70 million in federal disaster funding to help maintain coastal fishing communities because of the West Coast Salmon fishery closure. In addition, the WCGA is working on ways to address the impacts of climate change and coastal erosion impacting coastal communities along the entire West Coast.

Creating a Coastal and Marine Spatial Plan—The WCGA has applied to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for funding and technical support to develop a coastal and marine spatial plan for the West Coast to help support rational and orderly decisions regarding future offshore developments and resource management challenges off the West Coast.